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ABSTRACT

The research and development efforts cited in this paper deal with four related subsets: explicit questioning, purpose setting, implicit questioning, and social conventions related to classroom questioning behavior. The contents include "Inquiry Training as Reading Training," which discusses the importance of developing inquiry skills concurrently with reading skills; "Reading and Inquiry Curriculum," which discusses procedures needed to reduce inhibitions to curiosity and questioning, research and development efforts aimed at a comprehensive theory and a set of strategies for improving inquiry skills and related reading skills, the reciprocal question procedure (ReQuest), questioning behavior of children, and the Guided Reading Procedure; and "Where to from Here," which discusses further work on inquiry training. (WR)

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The Reading and Inquiry Complement

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It is not necessary to have an inquirying mind to learn how to read, but it is, by definition, necessary to have one to reach reading maturity; i.e., reading-thinking power. This symposium is intended to dramatize this point and to provide reference to practical suggestions from several recent research and development efforts converging to promote reading and inquiry skill development.

As a profession we now have the benefit of several years of programming efforts to aid us in determining what should be stressed as specific educational objectives. Each examination, however, seems to yield a different set of objectives. The objectives are then judged largely against traditional standards. This examination of (reading) objectives is offered to encourage the addition of an often overlooked factor to the criteria for assessing objectives. It is not offered as another educational objective, but as a standard, or rubric, of its own; vis-a-vis, phonic skills, perceptual training, main idea training, etc. This rubric is generically called "inquiry training." The research and development efforts cited in this paper deal with four related subsets: explicit questioning, purpose setting, implicit questioning, and social conventions related to classroom questioning behavior.

Inquiry Training as Reading Training

A question is the product of a complex integration of factors which come together to convert latent curiosity into 'manifest', or exhibited, curiosity.

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Reinforcement theory tells us that the consequences which follow an exhibition, albeit curiosity, will likely determine the extent, character and style of future manifestations, and will be generalized to related areas.

Reading, particularily reading comprehension, is a related area. Thus, it will logically be governed by many of the same consequences as are associated with early childhood and school experiences which dealt with expressions of curiosity. This influence will extend, not only to the levels in which one will likely comprehend, but to a large measure, what one does with new learning; treats it as a perfunctory conclusion to a question; adjoins it to other information in a generative way; permits it to influence future choices of behavior and values. To develop inquiry skills, then, is to develop a sense of wonder, an intrinsic sources of motivation.

Predictably, children who have learned to read, but who have not acquired a sense of inquiry, have had their reading skills diminish with the passage of time. This effect has been observed in inner city youngsters who were taught how to decode words with highly effective, linguistically oriented, programmed learning materials. Programs such as these, however, often become so preoccupied with teaching children to learn how to read that they virtually exclude language (and related inquiry training skills). Where this has been the case, decoding skills grow rapidly, but like over fertilized plants, the skills become arrested by third - fourth grade levels, eventually even regressing as the emphasis changes to reading to know. Related to this is the fact that many middle class children also learn to read without a sense of what the questions are for which one reads. As a result they too become arrested in their progress toward reading maturity. Some learn to read for escape. Others become dilettantes, opting to try to know everything, like bumble bees flittering from buttercup to buttercup. Still others never develop even the most primitive abilities, appearing for all the world to

be no better off than their disenfranchized counterparts in the inner city.

Taken together, these conditions suggest to us the importance of inquiry training as a central feature of reading training. What follows is a synopsis of our efforts to develop a reading and inquiry curriculum, one which serves both interests better than they would be served singularily. This we have called a 'synergistic' curriculum -- i.e., one in which the total effect is greater than the sum of the two effects taken independently.

Reading and Inquiry Curriculum

A reading and inquiry curriculum requires attention to many more facets of the student than are traditionally stressed. Procedures are needed to reduce inhibitions to curiosity and questioning, others are needed to re-kindle awareness of the implicit or unanswered questions which surround us, still others are needed to teach children the social conventions for questioning and exploring; and too, methods are needed to teach and give practice in framing questions.

If these procedures are successful, they will eliminate some of the invidious factors arresting development, and permit others to have their naturally reinforcing effects. For example, once students begin to inquire, they are reinforced by being able to participate more fully in directing their own learning. They are invited not only to learn what we know, but to help us answer questions for which we have no current answers, and more, to help us to unfold new questions.

For several years we have been working toward a comprehensive theory and a set of strategies for improving inquiry skills and related reading skills. At this stage, our work looks like a mosiac with several missing pieces. Research and development efforts have led us to work with kindergarten children,

secondary school youngsters, and college and adult students. Curiously, what we have learned at one age level appears to be generalizable to all other levels. Three factors seem to explain this. First, inquiry skills are not systematically taught at any level. Secondly, parallel social factors seem to impede the development of inquiry skills throughout the grades, And, thirdly, many of the teaching strategies developed at one level have proven to be equally effective with other age groups.

A brief statement about each of these research and development efforts will demonstrate this point. To date, we have developed a procedure to improve a student's ability to set his own purpose for reading and to better comprehend what he has read. This has been called the ReQuest, or reciprocal questioning procedure (Manzo, 1969). Solid experimental evidence with subjects ranging in age 7 to 26 years old, supports the value of this procedure for its intended purpose. Subsequent to the development of this procedure, we sought to establish the extent to which curiosity and inquiry skills were predictive of first grade reading achievement. No easy conclusions can be drawn from this study. One of the more easily intepretable findings, however, was the significant correlations (.01) found between a Questioning Behavior Index, (an experimenter designed measure of questioning ability, or proclivity to ask questions), with reading readiness and curiosity. This finding supported an earlier finding by Maw & Maw (1972).

Paralleling this study, a year long study was underway to better understand the character and extent of questioning of kindergarten children. Of particular interest were such concerns as, what classroom conditions may be inhibiting or facilitating student questions (?); what kinds of questions do children ask (?); and, how can the questioning behavior of children be increased and improved (?),

(Manzo & Legenza, 1974, in print). A summary of what has been learned from these two studies will be presented by Ms. Alice Legenza, our first speaker.

Overlapping somewhat with the period of study of the explicit questioning behavior of students, we began to treat the problem of teaching students to see implicit questions while reading, and reducing teacher dominance over interpretation of reading passages. The teacher inherits this control largely as a fact of being the only one who asks questions about what was read.

We have tried to achieve the latter with the "Guided Reading Procedure" (Manzo, 1974, in press), a technique which requires students to recall all that they have read without the benefit of teacher questions to guide them. An additional step in the procedure requires the student to realize in some way what he has not remembered accurately, and to resolve these implicit questions, or conflicting points of information, by a re-examination of the textual material. Victor Culver, of the University of Virginia, our second speaker, is conducting a comprehensive study of the efficacy of this procedure. In today's paper he will report on one aspect of this study, the extent to which this procedure reduces teacher verbal dominance over a reading/discussion lesson.

The final paper, which will be accompanied by a video tape demonstration, discusses the Ask-It-Rite procedure (Manzo, 1974). This unusual simulation technique was designed to improve student and teacher questioning and classroom discussion. The procedure concentrates on helping students and teachers to examine the classroom atmosphere which may be inhibiting healthy repartee. This is done through a 'stop action' technique, which serves as a safety zone where critical comments can be made with little fear of social repercussions.

Where to From Here

We have decided to declare a quasi-monitorium on further work on inquiry training per se. This decision was prompted by the realization that the reading-inquiry complement lacked a sufficient context in typical teaching practices to be readily accepted. To improve its credibility, we have opted to try to create an even larger rubric, of which inquiry and reading would only be subsets. We are calling this a "languaging" curriculum. A statement of current efforts to dileneate such a curriculum is being supported by a grant from the Butler Manufacturing Company Foundation. A preliminary report is expected to be ready by fall, 1974.

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